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1st Armored Division military police Soldiers train with MRAP during predeployment exercise

By Pfc. Jennifer Kennemer

16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – Soldiers from the 501st Military Police Company began working with Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles this week as part of their predeployment Mission Rehearsal Exercise training here.



SGT JASON STADEL

Staff Sgt. Roberto Delrio (center, on vehicle) speaks to fellow Soldiers of the 501st Military Police Company about the capabilities of the Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle as part of the unit's pre-deployment training at the Grafenwoehr (Germany) Training Area, Sept. 28.

The 501st is part of 1st Armored Division's Special Troops Battalion.

The MRAP, designed to counteract the improvised explosive device threat in Iraq and Afghanistan, has been in service since 2002.

The 501st Soldiers trained on the MaxxPro, a MRAP vehicle built onto the frame of a dump truck and equipped with more than 10 tons of armor and a V-shaped hull to deflect blasts.

The MRAPs are also equipped with a fire suppressant system. Sensors on the bottom of the vehicle can detect a fire and, using technology similar to a fire extinguisher, contain the blaze before it can cause extensive damage or harm the Soldiers inside.

“It is a proven fact that these vehicles save lives,” said Staff Sgt. Roberto Delrio, a light-wheeled mechanic and certified master driver who has been with the 501st for three years and is preparing for his second deployment to Iraq with the unit.

The training is an introduction to the MRAP vehicle, Delrio said, that teaches Soldiers about the features and capabilities of the vehicle, including the location of its escape hatches.

“The division is assigned 2,500 MRAPs (during its deployment),” said Sgt. Maj. Paul Vallade, 1st Armored Division logistics and maintenance sergeant major, who called the MRAP the perfect vehicle for Iraq. “The MRAP will more or less replace the Humvee for all operations conducted 'outside the wire.’”

Five MRAP vehicles were made available for training here.

“It’s great to be able to see what they (the MRAP) can do here, so you feel confident with it when you go 'downrange,’” said the 501st’s Pfc. Kevin Wolf. While new to the Army and the company, Wolf said he is looking forward to deployment and working with the vehicle.

“To me, it’s just like a big, armored school bus,” he said. As a gunner, Wolf said he appreciated the height of the vehicle and the advantage it provides for his line of sight.

The next step for the company is training its troops to drive the vehicle in a variety of terrain conditions to better understand its weight distribution and handling.



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